

REPORT
OF THE
JOINT COMMITTEE
OF THE
TWENTY-FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE
STATE OF IOWA,
APPOINTED TO VISIT THE
INDUSTRIAL HOME FOR THE BLIND,
LOCATED AT
KNOXVILLE.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

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REPORT.

DES MOINES, IOWA, January 25, 1894.

To the President of the Senate, Twenty-fifth General Assembly:

Your committee delegated to visit the Industrial Home for the Blind located at Knoxville, Iowa, having performed the duties thus assigned them, would respectfully beg to report:

We made careful examination of the books and vouchers in the office of the Superintendent of the institution, and from every evidence at our command, believed that the appropriations made to this Home by the Twenty-fourth General Assembly have been wisely, economically and judiciously expended for the purposes for which they were appropriated. The method of account keeping was found to be highly satisfactory, as was also the payment of money and the vouchers therefor taken and preserved. Upon this point we have no suggestions to make.

The Home is entirely free from debt and we find no debts have been contracted in excess of the appropriations either in regard to the buildings, or the subsistence of the inmates. In this connection, we are glad to note that the people of Knoxville are justly proud of this Home, as indeed the citizens of Iowa have every reason for being. The site for the Home is very pretty as well as commodious, and was a gift from the citizens of Knoxville. It contains fifty odd acres and is just outside the city limits.

We do not find that there has been any diversion of any money from the specific purpose for which it was appropriated.

We could discover no evidence of the violation of any law in the drawing of money from the State Treasury. This seems to have been accomplished by the regular legal methods.

The following is a complete list of the employes of the Home, together with compensation each receives for his or her services:

	Per Month
Superintendent. M. C. Gebhardt.	\$50.00
Matron. Mrs. M. E. Gebhardt.	20.00
Shop Foreman. A. C. Ferreby.	25.00
Engineer. John Yetter.	30.00
Teamster. George B. Smith.	25.00
Cook. Flora Edwards.	20.00
Assistant Cook. Hannah McIlwain.	12.00
Laundress. Ella Donnihy.	16.00
Waitress. Julia Donnihy.	8.00

It is well to note in this connection that in order to make the appropriations made to the Home by the Twenty-fourth General Assembly cover the period for which they were intended, the trustees were obliged not only to scale down the salaries of the employes, but to dispense with the services of a number of them. This in turn made it necessary to reduce the number of inmates. About this time, (August, 1893) the former Superintendent and Matron resigned, and the present efficient Superintendent, Mr. Gebhardt, and his excellent wife, became respectively Superintendent and Matron. As the trustees were limited in the matter of funds, the pay as above noted was temporarily agreed upon. Mr. Gebhardt is a very excellent business man, a skilled bookkeeper, as the books of the Home amply disclose. His duties at the Home bar him from following any other business, so that his time and abilities are wholly bestowed for the benefit of the Home. The salary of the former Superintendent was fixed \$1,000 per year, and we are of the opinion that the appropriations to be made by the General Assembly should be large enough that a like amount could be allowed the present Superintendent.

Regarding the interior of the Home, the best of order and cleanliness prevails. This work is directly under the supervision the of Matron, Mrs. Gebhardt. This work, in addition to being full of responsibilities, is very exacting of the time of the Matron. This labor should meet with a just reward. The former Matron received a salary of \$500.00 a year and it is our belief that Mrs. Gebhardt's salary should equal that amount.

In regard to the other employes whose salaries suffered because of the shortness of the appropriation: it is our judgment that these salaries should be placed back again as they were when the scaling down process became necessary. We do not believe it to be the policy of our State to require men and women to give up their services for a smaller consideration than like labor draws from other departments of life.

We find that further employes are needed at the Home as follows: One assistant foreman for shops, whose salary would likely be \$25.00 per month, but until the working force is increased, say to fifty men, his employment is not highly essential.

We deem the improvements asked for on pages 8 and 9 of the Home's report to the Governor under date of June 30, 1893, needed, and would recommend that they be granted. The appropriation for these asked for is \$2,000. We do not pass upon this. No other repairs upon the buildings are needed.

We desire to call your attention to the fact that this Home is without insurance. We think your appropriation should be large enough

that a reasonable line of insurance may be carried. The State has too much value here exposed to one accident, to ignore the importance of this suggestion.

We find that in the matter of all purchases of materials or supplies for the use of the Home, the principle of competitive bids has been universally resorted to, to the end that the best interests of the State have in all cases been conserved.

There are at present thirty-two inmates in the Home. Outside of the short work for them they were found contented and even happy with their surroundings. All reported that the food they received was ample and good, their quarters were neat and clean, and the beds comfortable. All reported themselves as perfectly satisfied with the treatment they received from the officers of the Home.

This Home is a broad piece of philanthropy on the part of our State that ought to meet with the endorsement of every right-minded citizen. These people, deprived of the greatest gift of nature, their eyesight, are furnished a haven where they may not only learn a useful trade, but may even earn a living as well. One cannot doubt the wisdom of the act that established this Home when they see those busy blind men and women at their work. The care and instruction of this otherwise helpless and dependent class, and the putting them upon some sort of footing with the rest of their race, is at once the most delicate and difficult problem that is rapidly being solved by our State at this Home.

There is shop room for working fifty men and twenty women, but the Home has at no time had so many inmates, and this brings us to a point where our report must be largely of a suggestive nature.

No blind man or woman that comes within the requirements of the Home's rules for admission, when they apply for admission, should be turned away because of the Home's inability to furnish them employment. This is especially true when we consider that the Home is not now able to fill and keep pace with demands for the articles manufactured by the inmates. If this be true, then why is not the work pushed and more people employed? The answer is that the fund set apart for this purpose by the Twenty-fourth General Assembly (\$3,000) was not found sufficient to increase the working force, or in fact to furnish steady employment to the small force they now have. For this fund this year the trustees ask you for the sum of \$10,000, and after a most thorough and careful investigation of the facts your committee unites their recommendation with the trustees' request that it be granted.

Our reason for this recommendation is this: it is the object of the trustees in respect to this fund, to use it as a capital working fund

and it being their hope to keep it intact. The present allowance of it will not, therefore, establish a precedent to be followed by a subsequent General Assembly. In fact, it is improbable if a subsequent request for an addition to this fund will be made by the trustees. It must be borne in mind that the product of the Home's shop goes on the market in competition with the production of like shops. The rules of trade apply alike to this as to other shops. Cash is rarely received for the orders, but comes in at intervals of thirty, sixty and ninety days from date of invoice, as is usual with commerce of like character. It may, therefore, be seen that with the small capital heretofore had, it could all be used up in manufactured articles and not in shape that any portion was available at a given time. It is a fact that it has not been found sufficient in amount to give the trustees the opportunity to take advantage of the trade and buy their materials at a time when it would be advantageous to the State to stock up the Home with material, or buy it in car load lots, thereby making a great saving to the State in the matter of freight charges. We would, therefore, recommend that \$10,000 be appropriated to the Home for this fund.

The trustees ask for an appropriation of the sum of \$35,300 divided into special funds as follows:

For manufacturing fund.....	\$10,000.00
For salary and subsistence fund.....	15,000.00
For buildings and grounds.....	5,000.00
For additional machinery.....	2,000.00
For contingent fund.....	3,000.00
For orchard and re-planting trees.....	300.00

Your committee would make the following recommendation that the sum of \$28,800 be allowed, divided into special funds as follows:

For manufacturing fund.....	\$10,000.00
For salary and subsistence fund.....	12,000.00
For buildings and grounds.....	3,000.00
For additional machinery.....	1,500.00
For contingent fund.....	2,000.00
For orchard and re-planting trees.....	300.00
Total.....	\$28,800.00

Respectfully submitted,

T. G. HARPER,
From the Senate.

ALVIN JONES,
W. S. SHRIVER,
From the House.
Committee.